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FM AMEMBASSY KABUL  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6662  
INFO RUCNAFG/AFGHANISTAN COLLECTIVE PRIORITY

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 KABUL 000058

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E.O. 12958: N/A  
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SUBJECT: AFGHANS, PAKISTANIS DISCUSS CROSS-BORDER  
COORDINATION WITH CTF CURRAHEE

11. (U) Summary. Two border-related events hosted by CTF Currahee January 5 and 6 brought together Afghan, Pakistani and Coalition force commanders to discuss better coordination of operations to disrupt insurgent activities along the border. At the January 5 Focused Border Development (FBD) meeting, Afghan Border Police (ABP) officers from commands in Khost, Paktya and Paktika reviewed with Coalition counterparts joint plans to enhance ABP recruiting, training and capabilities. The FBD conference was followed January 6 by a Super Border Flag meeting with Pakistani commanders, ANSF and Coalition Forces (CF) to address cross-border issues and strengthen communication links. End Summary.

#### ABP RECRUITING NUMBERS UP

12. (U) ABP's ramped up recruitment efforts in the region have paid dividends, with an increase in recruits entering Cycle 2 FBD training, according to ABP MG Mollakhel. Cycle 1, completed in December, produced over 300 graduates from the Gardez and Spin Boldak Training Centers; 570 recruits entered Cycle 2, now underway, and 600 recruits are expected for Cycle 3, set to begin mid-February. Afghan males between 18 and 35 years old are ABP's primary recruiting targets. The six-week training program teaches small unit tactics, weapons familiarization and marksmanship, driver training, search and surveillance techniques, first aid and leadership skills. The Gardez course, run by DynCorp, includes an additional two weeks of training.

13. (U) Better training is having a positive impact not only on recruiting and force morale, but also on local support for ABP, Mollakhel said. Much of the recruitment success is due to an intensive outreach campaign conducted by MG Mollakhel and Colonel Kochi and supported by CTF Currahee, featuring shuras, interviews and increased media coverage of ABP activities. Mollakhel pointed to successful shuras in Waza Khwa (Paktika) and Jaji Madan (Khost), both initially reluctant communities, that ended with high numbers of eager recruits and increased local support for ABP. Jaji Madan elders even agreed to donate land for an ABP training facility. Mollakhel plans to conduct recruiting shuras in East Paktika's Bermel, Skhin, Margah and Gomal districts next; similar efforts by NDS chiefs and governors to reach out to elders and mullahs in border areas would help boost numbers and support as well.

14. (U) Mollakhel emphasized ABP efforts to eliminate corruption have also improved the force's public image. Excess funds discovered at battalions in East Paktika and Khost were sent back to the national treasury, he said, and failure to report for duty is no longer tolerated, with 32 ABP recently fired. Any ABP conspiring with criminals to

extort money from citizens will be arrested, as occurred in Wardak. Colonel Kochi, a key player in recruitment efforts, said information about pay, equipment and benefits is persuading more young Afghans to sign up and reducing the number of drop-outs leaving for higher-paying work in Dubai. Posting new ABP closer to home initially would also help with recruitment and retention, as would increasing the number of officers in the field.

¶5. (U) Mollakhel praised the FBD program, aimed at building ABP's capacity to defend the border more effectively. By August, following several FBD training cycles, ABP will be a fully trained and equipped force. CTF Currahee is now implementing plans to partner a CF company with every ABP battalion as part of that effort. Monthly ANA-CF planning meetings will soon include ABP officers to better integrate the border fight into regional ANSF operations.

#### JOINT OPERATIONS TO COMBAT ENEMY PROPAGANDA

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¶6. (U) Mollakhel proposed joint combat operations with ANA, ANP and CF to undermine enemy propaganda about night raids and civilian casualties. Combined maneuvers consisting of ambushes, small rapid operations and mobile patrols will help prevent the enemy from returning to cleared areas and taking revenge on locals who help the government. Cordoning off an area and searching at dawn with ANSF in the lead, instead of at night, will help gain local support. Greater sensitivity to local customs combined with better trained and equipped border police will build public confidence. Several battalion commanders emphasized the need for heavy weapons, including DSHKAs, mortars and artillery, to combat a

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well-armed enemy. In some cases, sub-standard Egyptian or Pakistani weapons were supplied instead of the Russian and Hungarian weapons ordered.

#### SUPER BORDER FLAG MEETING

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¶7. (U) Culminating a series of border flag meetings with individual Afghan and Pakistani battalions, TF Currahee hosted a Super Border Flag meeting January 6, bringing together senior commanders from Pakistan's 27th Brigade-11th Corps, ABP, ANA and CF. Afghan and Pakistani officers agreed better communication and more coordination would help to eliminate misunderstandings that sometimes escalate tensions unnecessarily. "Our soldiers need to know that we and our High Commands want cooperation and joint solutions to problems by company commanders," ANA 203rd Thunder Corps Commander MG Khaliq said.

¶8. (SBU) Noting that the enemy could no longer cross the border in vehicle convoys, Pakistani 27th Brigade Commander BG Hidayat-Ur-Rehman said foot traffic across the difficult terrain continues. Enemy efforts to control cross-border routes include attempts to incite Shia-Sunni conflict, particularly during Muharram; Pakistani officials have worked hard to prepare communities to resist such tactics. Hidayat-Ur-Rehman urged ANSF and CF to let PakMil forces know when operations are underway so soldiers in the field will not misunderstand what is happening. The enemy is waiting to take advantage of any confusion between border forces, making close coordination essential. While communication has improved, Hidayat-Ur-Rehman said there have been lapses. "We need a mechanism that ensures consistent communication both ways."

¶9. (SBU) The participants discussed conducting coordinated operations, building off a small joint maneuver being planned in southeastern Paktika. Hidayat-Ur-Rehman proposed coordinating an on-going Pakistani campaign to disrupt Taliban activity in the south with a similar Afghan campaign to the north. Once the areas are clear of insurgents, ANSF and PakMil would distribute medical care, blankets, food and other necessities to local communities to generate good will.

Local support would also increase with better systems for allowing civilians, both Afghan and Pakistani, to cross the border more easily to tend crops, visit relatives and conduct their business, Hidayat-Ur-Rehman said.

COMMENT

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¶10. (SBU) By bringing senior Afghan and Pakistani military officers face to face, the Super Border Flag Meeting moved the border fight one step further along. The initially tense atmosphere was considerably more relaxed at the event's conclusion, with both sides acknowledging that Pakistan and Afghanistan are each threatened by terrorism, and that combined action is needed to defeat a common enemy that doesn't recognize borders. CTF Currahee will continue to hold regular border flag meetings aimed at building trust and cooperation. As ABP's capacity improves through FBD and partnering with CF, opportunities for combined cross-border operations, with CF and eventually with PakMilcounterparts, are likely to increase.

¶11. (U) TF Currahee Commander Col. Johnson has reviewed this cable.  
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